

## Your Favorite Page . . . English is easy to learn!!

- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
- 2) The farm was used to produce produce.
- 3) The dump was so full it had to refuse refuse.
- 4) He could lead if he got the lead out.
- 5) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.

*In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell? How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?*

- 6) Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
- 7) A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
- 8) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
- 9) I did not object to the object.
- 10) The insurance was invalid for an invalid.

*Why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, two geese. So one moose, two meese. One index, two indices. Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?*

- 11) There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
- 12) They were too close to the door to close it.
- 13). The buck does funny things when the does are present.
- 14) A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
- 15) The wind was too strong to wind the sail.

*If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? Your house can burn up as it burns down, you fill in a form by filling it out, and an alarm goes off by going on. Why when the stars are out they are visible, but when the lights are out they are invisible? Why doesn't Buick rhyme with Quick?*

- 16) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
- 17) I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
- 18) How can intimate this to my most intimate friend?

*And take the two letter word "UP..."*

It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list. But when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP and why are the officers UP for an election, and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? We call UP our friends. We use it to brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver; we warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and some guys fix UP the old car.

And this UP is confusing: a drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP. We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night.

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out we say it is clearing UP. When it rains it wets the earth and often messes things UP. When it doesn't rain for awhile, things dry UP.

One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, because my time is UP, so it's time to shut UP. And by the way, what is the first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night? U-P!

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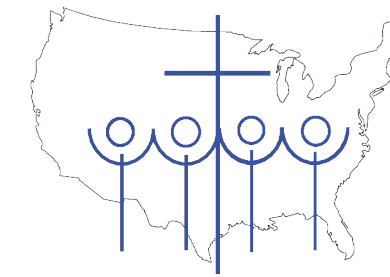
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March 9, 2011  
 Ash Wednesday

Greetings, my friend!

This is the first issue of this newsletter for the year 2011. It feels like forever since I last wrote, and not just because of the passage of time.

What a winter it's been! Most of the nation suffered through unusual winter weather. I was down in Atlanta at my sister's for Christmas; it was the first white Christmas that area had experienced in 128 years! Here in South Bend we've had well over 100" of snow...I mean, that's over 9' of the white stuff. Course, I could be writing this from the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada range in California, where the snow depth is 262" as of March 3rd. Well....yeah .... guess 100" ain't too bad after all!

But it's not just the weather that has made this an extraordinary winter. The elections back in November ushered in some sweeping national changes at all levels of government. Major changes in American health care took effect January 1<sup>st</sup>. African and Middle Eastern nations have been turned upside down by peaceful or violent revolutions. Large-scale protests have roiled statehouses. The last living World War 1 vet died in Charles Town, WV. A few days earlier the

pin-up girl beloved of so many World War 2 vets passed on – Jane Russell, may you rest in peace. And Charlie Sheen and Lindsey Lohan, God bless 'em, continue to titillate everyone.

I'm sure there's a hundred and one other things that have happened since Christmas that I haven't mentioned. These events have touched our world, our nation, and our Church....and your life and mine as well. Some make the headlines. Other things make the local papers. Still others stay within the family. Some events are joyful, others saddening.

And there are always the delightful surprises that brighten one's day. Back on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, for example, after a 6 week absence, I had my usual 4:00 Mass at a local health care and rehab facility. Into the chapel comes an elderly man in a wheelchair who looked vaguely familiar. He was wearing a T-shirt that proudly proclaimed his Irish-ness. After Mass, I introduced myself and he introduced himself: "I'm Bern Norling." Well, blow me away! Dr. Norling was my history prof while I was an ND undergrad...he taught me in the 1969 and 1970 school years. Forty-one years later, our paths cross again, and this time I am ministering to him!!! Forty-one years!!!! Yow!!

Professor Norling had a favorite line: "The world is a vast insane asylum." He would use it after describing political maneuverings or giving reasons why nations went to war. The line is appropriate today for our world, our nation, our Church. So that's why we need Easter. That's why we need surprises that are joyful and happy. Lent is a wonderful time to let go of all the negativity, all the inner and outer chaos that assaults our lives. We can let go of these things and look for the small delightful surprises that God builds into our life each day. That's why I reflect on Easter as you'll see on the next two pages.

I wish for you a prayerful, peaceful Lent, and a joyful Easter Season. All in the Development Office join me in that prayer.

Love deeply, pray faithfully, laugh often!

## EASTER 2011 REFLECTION

It seems like every Easter I'm at a loss for words. It's just too big a mystery, too big an event. It's hard to get my mind and heart wrapped around it, it's so big. But it just now occurred to me as I was writing that last sentence that maybe that's the way it's meant to be. Rather than me trying to get my mind and heart around it, the trick is to let Easter wrap itself around me!!

Easter is the near absolute silence of the Dakota prairies....a silence that is actually felt. It's the majesty of the Rockies, the Alps, or the Dolomites of northern Italy. It's the sheer power of Niagara Falls. It's the lushness of a deep forest, and the crispness of an early morning field with the dew resting on the grass and spider webs. It's the muteness one experiences when standing in a grove of ancient redwoods or sequoias. It's the ancientness of Adirondack Park in upstate New York, the "absolutely fits in" of an alpine village snuggled in the arms of the mountain valley. It's driving through Iowa and being surprised at the rolling landscape when you expected flat, or going through northwestern New Jersey, expecting industrial and commercial development and thinking: "Hey, this is really pretty country!"

Easter is standing outside in a snowfall, letting the flakes fall onto the arm of your jacket, and seeing the beauty and uniqueness of each individual crystal until it melts away. It is the exhilaration that a skier must feel being the first to make his or her way down a mountainside, hearing the schuss of the skies in the virgin snow. It's suddenly noticing how you're eating supper and it's light outside instead of dark. It's seeing the swelling of the buds on the trees, and those first sunshiny warm days after a long winter. Easter is the sights, the sounds, the smells of a Fall day, with the color everywhere you look and the rustle of the leaves as you walk along. It's sitting in the shade with a cold beer or ice tea at your side.

Easter is rubbing a dog's silky ear, having a cat purring away in your lap. It's seeing a squirrel you've been trying to tame come up and for the first time taking that peanut from your fingers. It's actually recognizing the beasties that inhabit your backyard, giving them names, and missing them when they aren't there. It's Gus the cockatiel sounding off when I walk in the door, or your dog or cat welcoming you home in their own unique way.

Easter is snuggling with a loved one, contemplating your son or daughter as s/he sleeps. It's the excitement of waiting for someone's arrival in an airport, scanning every face in the incoming crowd, looking for THE one. It's seeing or hearing of the heroism of ordinary men and women, risking their lives to save someone endangered. It's waking up one day after a painful loss and realizing that somehow, somehow, the grief has noticeably lifted and life feels more hopeful. It's going to Mass on Sunday and seeing the familiar faces in the familiar places and knowing that you belong. Sitting at a family gathering, Easter wraps itself around you when you look around contentedly and think: "Wow, this is great!" It's watching someone you love overcoming an addiction and sticking with the program. It's realizing your diet really is working because you've gone down a full size.

Easter is the song in your heart that suddenly bursts forth, the humming as you stack the dishwasher, getting totally lost in your favorite music. It's the tears that flow in a chick flick, or the rapture that comes when you've shot your best golf score ever. It's joy in seeing how different the world looks through windows that have just been cleaned. It's the last day of your kitchen remodel, the final payment on your mortgage or car loan. It's finding a job after months of trying, or selling the house after months on the market.

It's the feeling of sinking into a hot tub on a day when you're so tired your hair hurts. It's an attack of the giggles, or laughing so hard you wet your pants. It's a Cub fan seeing his team win the World Series, or an ND football fanatic seeing the team decisively beating Michigan and Southern Cal...or maybe even winning a National Championship. It's watching Tim Conway and Harvey Korman doing their thing on the Carol Burnett Show, the Three Stooges, the Honeymooners, the Lawrence Welk Show, I Love Lucy.

Easter is, in short, the simple sheer joy of being alive. Totally alive. Alive in a world that despite all the evil we see and experience, remains a place of beauty. Alive in the joy of the people you love and who love you. It's being totally in union with the world, with God, with others, with oneself, even if only for a brief moment.

Even though Easter does wrap itself around us in beautiful ways, there are still many areas of life where Easter is a work in progress. Marriages and relationships struggle. Family members need 24-7 care. Children and spouses are mentally, physically, or sexually abused. Family estrangements occur over the most trivial things. Unemployment creates enormous stress. Those who are struggling financially get nickled and dimed to death.

Mental health issues and PTSD and severe brain injury affect thousands of our military personnel and their families, and not enough is being done for them. State and Federal budgets are balanced by gutting education, social services, infrastructure, environmental protection. We watch radical change in the Middle East, and while supportive of the aspiration of common folk, we rail against the increase in gas prices or further military commitment. There is still too much "Not in my backyard" and "What's in it for me."

We see Republicans and Democrats sitting together at the President's State of the Union address, and maybe hoping that things can work out, yet knowing that it's going to be "New Day, same old stuff." For some, Easter is seeing the Tea Party bringing about needed change, while others take joy in seeing Tea Party initiatives or candidates defeated. Many support the demonstrators in state capitals fighting for their right to collectively bargain; just as many want to tell them to "get a life." For many Catholics, Easter means the realization of their power and ability to bring about the Kingdom of God, while others rejoice when the hierarchy smacks down a person or movement that is getting "too unorthodox."

Where there is no union, Easter has not yet arrived. Where others feel their life and dreams and aspirations being stifled or snuffed, Easter has not yet arrived. When one's first concern is "how does this affect me" instead of the common good, Easter has not yet arrived. Easter has not arrived when there remains a lack of civility and politeness in discourse and behavior. When the legitimate needs of the youngest, oldest, and most vulnerable members of the world's societies are not being met, there is no Resurrection.

Even though we have already received the fullness of life through the death and resurrection of Jesus, all creation still groans as though in childbirth, to use Paul's words in his letter to the Romans. We are all a work in progress...and may God bring to completion the good work he has begun.

**"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass...It's learning how to dance in the rain!"**